THE RAGTIMER

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PUBLISHED BY

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

TREEMONISHA

Our stock of the Scott Joplin opera TREEMONISHA is now exhausted. The 230 page opera was reprinted by the Society as a special project some years ago. We are not planning on a further reprinting in the forseeable future...

Please strike item CF500 TREEMONISHA
from your copy of the Society's catalogue.

CONCERT IN RAGTIME & THE OTHER SIDE OF RAGTIME

Our stock of records Concert In Ragtime by John Arpin RSR-03 and The Other Side Of Ragtime by John Arpin RSR-06 is depleted. These records have been temporarily discontinued by Scroll Records.

Please strike items RSR-03 CONCERT IN RAGTIME
& RSR-06 THE OTHER SIDE OF RAGTIME from your
copy of the Society's catalogue.

COMPLETE PIANO WORKS OF SCOTT JOPLIN & JAMES SCOTT

Our November/December 1970 issue of THE RAGTIMER was accompanied by a flyer listing certain records by Audiophile.

PLEASE NOTE: The Complete Piano Works Of Scott Joplin AP 71/72 and The Complete Piano Works Of James Scott AP 76/77 consist of 2 records per album and the price is therefore $12.00 for either album. Some of our members failed to notice this when ordering.

WALLY ROSE ON PIANO - Blackbird C 12007

The Society's stock of this record is now sold out. Members who wish to acquire the record should write to -

LEON KELERT
BLACKBIRD RECORDS
607 West Deming
Chicago, Ill. 60614
U.S.A.

The title is 'Wally Rose On Piano' Blackbird C 12007. The issue is made as 'Jazz From San Francisco series - Volume 1'.

RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

PLEASE REMEMBER

EVERY MEMBER - can do something for RAGTIME:

1. Secure at least one new member each year for THE SOCIETY!
2. Furnish material suitable for publication in THE RAGTIMER!
3. Keep up your interest in RAGTIME!

Be sure to "add a little ragtime to your Springtime!". Here at the Society's headquarters we are happy to welcome the spring season once more. A slogan used by the publicity and tourist bureau people in these parts goes like this... "Ontario - Is there any place you'd rather be?". The past winter made it easy to think of places. With blizzards and snow piling up drifts well above the "Ragtime" line, it was tough to take at times, especially when you add the cold and traffic tie-ups that went along with it. Still the mail went through - well nearly. Mail going out to our UK members got caught in the embargo that went into effect in January. We hope by the time this issue of THE RAGTIMER is in the mail the UK situation will be back to normal.

Members who attended the 1968 Bash of the Society will remember the fine singing voice of Olive Brown, Toronto's favourite "Empress of the Blues". We heard recently that Miss Brown is now Mrs. Hudson L. Graham and residing in St. Louis. The word is that she is still singing and working on a project entitled "A Black Study on the Blues".

Eubie Blake's fans were delighted to read the MUSIC section of NEWSWEEK, (Feb. 22/71) and to find the excellent article about him by Hubert Saal entitled "MR. RAGTIME".

In preparing for the October Bash we want Mike Montgomery, Tex Wyndham and Carl Baxter to all know that their comments made by letter about our last bash will be helpful reference.

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THOSE RAGTIME YEARS 1909

by JACK CUFF

The year has welcomed a large number of fine ragtime compositions. Following the unfortunate breakup last year between John Stark and Scott Joplin, the Seminary Music Company of New York has become the key publisher of Joplin's output. Nevertheless it has been a good year for "The King of Ragtime Composers". Five compositions have been published by Seminary entitled "Paragon Rag", "Wall Street Rag", "Country Club", "Solace" and "Euphonic Sounds".

It is reported that Scott has found a new and happy companionship with a New Yorker named Lottie Stokes. Rumour has it that the sound of Wedding music is expected any day now. The mood is reflected in his new composition "Pleasant Moments".

Meanwhile, "The King of Ragtime Publishers", John Stark, has not remained ilde. Stark has published some excellent classic ragtime. His "composer" stable now includes Joseph Lamb, the most important white contributor of classical ragtime music. Joe's work this year gives us "Excelsior" rag and "Ethiopia" rag.

John Stark has further published two new rags by James Scott, "The Ragtime Betty" and "Sunburst". Scott has also had his "Great Scott Rag" published by the Allen Music Company back in Columbia, Missouri.

The famous Russian pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff has been touring the American Continent this year. A favourite with his audiences is his popular composition "Prelude in C Sharp Minor".

William Howard Taft, a republican from Ohio, has been inaugurated as the 27th President of the United States. The former President, Theodore Roosevelt, has turned to big game hunting in the wilds of Africa. A comic song this year called "Moving Day in Jungle Town" by A. Seymour Brown and Nat Ayer is said to have been slanted at the Roosevelt expedition.

Explorer Robert Edwin Peary after earlier attempts, claims to have discovered and visited the North Pole. However, Peary is now faced with the counter claim of Dr. Frederick Cook who has announced that he, rather than Peary had already reached the Pole first, in April of last year. Peary has denounced the physician's claim as fraudulent. The National Geographic Society intends to investigate the validity of the claims made.

From June 1st to October 15th. the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific exposition is being held at Seattle to celebrate the territorial developments.

In New York the Hudson-Fulton celebrations mark the tercentenary of the discovery of the Hudson by Henry Hudson along with the centennial of its navigation by Robert Fulton's steamboat.

Cartoonist Winsor McKay's successful strip "Gertie the Dinosaur" in the New York American has been prepared in the form of thousands of drawings in changing sequence. In turn these have been photographed to produce the first picture film to achieve motion from a series of drawings. The films are being called animated cartoons.

Gentlemen this year are tilting their bowlers and boaters for a better view of the new craze in women's fashions - hobble skirts.

The United States is in the process of recognizing the 100th anniversary year of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. This year the "Indian Head" penny design in use since 1859 has been replaced with the "Lincoln Head". The U. S. post office has issued postage stamps to commemorate the Lincoln Anniversary as well as the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific and the Hudson-Fulton celebrations.

Mass production of an automobile is being attempted for the first time by Henry Ford. His car is called a "Model T Ford".

The "Brooklyn" Bridge in New York has acquired the companionship of two new bridges. The new "Queensborough" bridge was opened on March 30th and the new "Manhattan" bridge will be ready by the end of the year.

A dreadful loss of lives occured recently in a disaster at St. Paul Mine at Cherry, Illinois, where a total of 393 miners died.

"A Girl of the Limberlost" by Gene Stratton-Porter is a popular book of the year. Popular musical productions playing New York at this time includes "The Chocolate Soldier", "A Trip to Japan" and "Ziegfeld Follies of 1909".

It is a vintage year for popular songs, ragtime and otherwise. In the show "Tillie's Nightmare" Marie Dressler has a winner with "Heaven Will Protect The Working Girl". This was written by Edgar Smith and A. Baldwin Sloane. Nora Bayes of "The Jolly Bachelors" has a singing success with "Has Anybody Here Seen Kelly?". This is a revised version by William J. McKenna from the original overseas number "Kelly" (from the Isle of Man) by C. W. Murphy and Will Letters. Carrie (Carrie Marry Harry) by Junie McCree and Albert Von Tilzer is another popular song of the year.

John McCormack, the celebrated Irish tenor, is making his American debut on November 10th at Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera House in New York as Alfredo in Verdi's "La Traviata".

An instant success has been made with a railroad train song called "Casey Jones" by T. Lawrence Seibert and Eddie Newton. It is said that inspiration for the song comes from the story of an engineer named "Casey" Jones who filled in for his sick friend, the regular engineer. The incident took place some nine years ago on a Sunday night in the year 1900. Casey took the Cannonball Limited out of Memphis and while travelling through Mississippi was killed in the wreck resulting from a collision with another train.

The words of the song, "With his hand on the throttle, scalded to death by the steam" tells of a man who was loyal in his duty to the end. In the folklore of railroading Casey Jones has become a legendary hero.

Will Rossiter has published a big one "Meet Me Tonight In Dreamland" with words by Beth Wilson to the music of Leo Friedman. It is in the best seller class along with the new Jerome H. Remick's release "Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet" by Stanley Murphy and Percy Wenrich. A relatively new composer named Irving Berlin has tried his hand at a ragtime version of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" and has titled it "That Mesmerizing Mendelssohn Tune". Berlin seems to treat ragtime as a syncopated style of composition rather than a classical and original musical form. He also has a ragtime song called "Yiddle On Your Fiddle" (Play some Ragtime).

The prominent song writer and director-impressario of Pekin Theater Chicago fame, Joe Jordan, has composed "That Teasin' Rag". He is now collaborating in New York with Bob Cole and Rosamond Johnson in the writing of an operetta which will be called "Red Moon". W. C. Handy has written a political campaign song named "Mister Crump". (In a few years time it will become an all-time favourite under a new title "Memphis Blues").

The list of popular songs this year is indeed a long one. Here are a few more of the better ones:

By The Light Of The Silvery Moon (Madden & Edwards)
Come After Breakfast, Bring 'Long Your Lunch, And Leave 'Fore Supper Time (Smith & Burris)
I've Got Rings On My Fingers (Weston, Barnes & Scott)
I Wish I Had My Old Girl Back Again (MacDonald & Wallace)
I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now (Hough, Adams, Howard & Orlob)
"Ship Ahoy" - All The Nice Girls Love A Sailor (Mills & Scott)
You Taught Me How To Love You, Now Teach Me To Forget (Drislane, Bryan & Meyer).

As already stated, it is a bumper year for ragtime generally. George Botsford was responsible for quantity at least with his "Pianophiends Rag", "Texas Steer Rag", "The Big Jubilee", "Old Crow Rag", "Wiggle Rag" and "Fat Men On Parade". So far, none has surpassed the popularity being enjoyed by his "Black And White Rag" of last year.

Two excellent rag compositions are "The Cubanola Glide" with words by Vincent Bryan and music by Harry Von Tilzer and "That's A Plenty" with words by Henry Creamer and music by Bert Williams. Charles L. Johnson scores with four new numbers, "Porcupine Rag", "Apple Jack (Some Rag)", "Tobasco" and "Kissing Bug Rag". Henry Lodge is a newcomer with "Ole South (Plantation Dance)", "Skylark (Intermezzo)", and best of all "Temptation Rag". Paul Pratt is another new composer to ragtime with his "Vanity Rag". Still another is J. Russel Robinson with "Sapho Rag".

Compared to other popular forms of music, the flood of ragtime compositions which has become available this year is cogent proof of ragtime's status as "an established sign of the times". A further selected list is set out, which is in addition to

the many rags already mentioned:

Boone's Southern Rag Medley No. 2 (Blind Boone)
The Cauldron Rag (Christensen)
Wireless Rag (Adeline Shepherd)
Spots (Ed. Blake)
Uncle Tom's Cabin (Tierney)
Everybody's Rag (Goldsmith-Sharp)
Bachelor's Button (Powell)
Blue Blazes Rag (Sizemore)
Bud Rag (Cross)
Buzzer Rag (May Aufderheide)
Calico Rag (Behan)
The Candy Rag (Bircher)
Cincinnati Rag (Powell)
Clover Leaf Rag (Seymour)
Dakota Rag (Anderson)
Frozen Bill Rag (Arthur Pryor)
The Full Moon Rag (Roy Carew)
Mop Rag (Helen Eaton)
Oh! You Devil Rag (Ford Dabney)
Pious Peter - Cakewalk (Van Alstyne)
Rag Bag Rag (Harry J. Lincoln)
Rubber Plant Rag (Geo. L. Cobb)
Slivers (Harry Cook)
The Thriller Rag (May Aufderheide)

There is obvious competition in the use of slang expressions in two 1909 songs. "I Love My Wife, But Oh You Kid!" by Armstrong and Clark (Harold Rossiter Music Co.) and "I Love, I Love, I Love My Wife, But Oh You Kid!" by Lucas and Tilzer (Harry Von Tilzer Music Pub. Co.). The Ragtime Era is moving along with its own sense of humour.

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BASH - 1971

The Society is looking forward to the holding of another RAGTIME get together. The anticipated date is expected to be arranged for mid-October 1971. Definite information should be ready for the next issue of THE RAGTIMER.

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Blackbird C 12007 'Wally Rose On Piano'

Selections: Peace And Plenty Rag; St. Louis Rag; Pastime Rag #4;
New Era Rag; Pickles And Peppers; Cannonball Rag; Junk Man Rag;
Elite Syncopations; Jamaica Jinger Rag; St. Louis Tickle.

The revival of interest in traditional jazz and ragtime that took place during the early 1940's was spearheaded, in no small measure, by Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band -- a San-Francisco-based group of young professional musicians and jazz record collectors who took the somewhat risky step of abandoning their careers as successful dance and swing musicians to play a form of jazz that had been virtually dead for about a decade. The pianist for this remarkable organization was Wally Rose, whose rich, swinging ragtime style was one of the most satisfying sounds of the rediscovery of ragtime.

Rose's first ragtime recordings were made with the Watters band, usually accompanied by just the rhythm section, but occasionally with the powerful and distinctive sound of the four-man front line (two trumpets, trombone and clarinet) in for the introduction or last chorus. These records are still available on the Good Time Jazz label on several Lps devoted primarily to the Watters band; see, for example, Good Time Jazz L-12001 for 'The Easy Winners', 'Pineapple Rag', 'New Orleans Joys', 'Original Rags' and 'Pastime Rag No. 5' -- L-12002 for 'Climax Rag', 'Harlem Rag' and 'Sunburst Rag', -- L-12003 for 'Triangle Jazz Blues' -- L-12007 for 'Hot House Rag' and 'Temptation Rag' -- and L-12025 for 'Black And White Rag'.

After the Watters organization broke up in the late 1940's, Rose hooked on with a fine jazz band led by Watters' former trombonist, Turk Murphy. This group, which included two other Watters alumni, clarinetist Bob Helm and banjoist Dick Lammi, made an excellent series of recordings for Columbia, all of which are now deleted. Rose also recorded with Bob Scobey's Frisco Band on Good Time Jazz L 12032 and L 12033, with his own jazz band on now-deleted Columbia CL 782, and with Watters on Down Home MGD 3, Verve MGV 1005 and MGV 1008, and Fantasy 5016. He has also appeared on a couple of Lps which feature his own ragtime piano playing, and these items, of principal interest to ragtimers, are listed below:

Columbia CL 559 'The Music Of Jelly Roll Morton': Kansas City Stomps, Sweet Substitute, Frog-i-more Rag, Tom Cat Blues, London Blues, Sidewalk Blues, Mr. Jelly Lord, Big Fat Ham, Jelly Roll Blues, Stratford Hunch, Wild Man Blues, Shreveport Stomp, Milenberg Joys, 35th Street Blues, New Orleans Blues, The Pearls.

Columbia CL 6260 (10-inch Lp) 'Wally Rose Ragtime Piano Masterpieces': Hot House Rag, Scott Joplin's New Rag, Rooster Rag, Trilby Rag, Triangle Jazz Blues, Nonsense Rag, Hot Chocolate, Castle House Rag.

Good Time Jazz M 12034 'Ragtime Classics By Wally Rose': Topliner Rag, Gladiolus Rag, Red Pepper Rag, The Pearls, Euphonic Sounds, Frog Legs Rag, Springtime Rag, King Porter Stomp, Easy Winners, Pineapple Rag, Cascades Rag, Harlem Rag.

CL 559, recorded with Turk Murphy's Jazz Band, is a superb Lp of full-band recordings of many of Jelly's best numbers, some of which are rarely heard these days. Rose's two-fisted, rolling piano was so prominently featured throughout this Lp that he was given co-leader credit along with Murphy.

CL 6260 contains Rose's best ragtime piano solos, despite the fact that it was recorded on a partially out-of-tune piano with thumb tacks in the felts sitting in someone's spare bedroom. It also is no longer available, but it is one to grab if a copy turns up. Featuring an impeccably selected program, the disc captures Rose obviously at ease and getting the most out of the instrument and the tunes.

Good Time Jazz M 12034 is still available, and as such, it is the Rose Lp that most ragtime fans will enjoy best. On this one, Rose was accompanied by string bass and drums in a properly unobtrusive manner that enhances the powerful drive inherent in his piano style.

The other Lps mentioned above are mostly unavailable also, but just to complete the story, CL 782 contains 'Grizzly Bear', and Fantasy 5016 features Rose on 'The Villian' (a piano rag written by Watters) and 'Pork And Beans'. Finally, a Columbia promotional Lp issued in the 1950's called 'I Like Jazz' (Columbia JZ 1) contained a breathtaking solo performance of 'Maple Leaf Rag'.

Good Time Jazz M 12034 was recorded in 1958 and was virtually the last recorded effort by Rose until this new Blackbird Lp of piano solos, cut in 1968. The loss has been a sore one over the years. Rose had good taste in selecting ragtime material for recording, and though he tended to deviate somewhat from the printed scores (mostly in the direction of keeping the rhythmic pulse flowing smoothly), he gave the rags a completely sympathetic reading and developed a unified ragtime style.

It is somewhat disappointing, therefore, to find that Rose is not quite up to par on this Lp. The tunes are superb choices, and the old, rolling rhythm is generally still present, but there is something lacking in the execution on a few of the numbers. Rose doesn't sound quite on top of some of the rags, with consequent hesitations and a few clinkers. Perhaps a rhythm accompaniment would have put him more at ease, or maybe a few more takes on the selections would have done the trick.

Nevertheless, if the Lp suffers by comparison with the high standard Rose set for himself a couple of decades ago, it still contains plenty of good, lilting ragtime and is a welcome addition to the current ragtime catalogue. One hopes that it will inaugurate additional recordings by this giant of the ragtime revival. It's good to have him back, and if you get the Lp, I rather think you'll agree.

MARGARET MITCHELL

by JOHN R. ANDERSON

THE RAGTIMER is aware of the major contribution women made to RAGTIME during the era when the music was at the pinnacle of its popularity and in the years that followed. The ragtime compositions of May Aufderheide, Adeline Shepherd, Kathryn Widmer, Sadie Koninsky, Carrie Bruggeman Stark and others live on for the enjoyment of today's ragtimers.

Then there were the women who performed and embraced ragtime with the same enthusiasm. A fine lady, Mrs. Margaret C. Mitchell, is one of that great Company of ragtimers. She began her professional ragtime career in the year 1904 as a ragtime plugger in the sheet music department of a Baltimore store. Her ragtime activities rapidly gained her much attention and recognition over the long stretch of years to the present day. Even the burden of declining health and advancing years has not deprived her of an ongoing ability to "tickle" a piano with authority.

John R. Anderson, whose father is Stanley E. Anderson of Anderson Piano Service in Napa, California where Mrs. Mitchell now lives, interviewed Margaret and as a result prepared the biographical outline contained on the following pages. We give a warm salute to "Mitch" Mitchell!

Here is the story that resulted from Mr. Anderson's interview:

MARGARET (CYRILLA GILFUS) MITCHELL

At the turn of the century, a prominent lawyer in Baltimore, Harry Harmon, opened a novelty store, devoting sections to the sale of sheet music, and electric refrigerators, which were just appearing on the market. As was the practice in those days, sheet music sales were boosted if the salesman had a piano player to play them for the prospective purchasers. The subject of this article, Margaret Gilfus, at the tender age of thirteen, noticed that Mr. Harmon was going into the sheet music business and promptly applied for the position of playing the piano in his new store, having to pursue him ultimately to his girl friend's house for an interview. His girl friend had published a song, which he asked Margaret to play, sight unseen. He was so impressed with her rendition that he hired her at once, placing a sign in his store window, "COME IN AND HEAR THE CHILD WONDER PLAY!" The people would come in to listen to Margaret play, and be approached to buy refrigerators and sheet music.

This plan worked so well, that her beginning salary of $3.00 a week was challenged by Bernheimer's, the big department store across the street, who offered her $5.00 a week. Quoting Margaret: "Boy, I was a big shot then! So I said, 'Sure, I'll come over to your store next Monday, after I get through here Saturday'. So I collected my $3.00 and said, 'Goodbye, Mr. Harmon. I'm going to work at Bernheimer's Monday'.

He just about had a fit. I went to Bernheimer's and played the piano for $5. 00 a week. Then Harmon got me on the side and said, 'I'll give you $7. 00 a week. ' So I said, 'Okay, I'll come over to your store Monday." This was followed by another offer from Bernheimer's and Margaret continued to follow her latest offer until she reached $12. 00 a week, which was more than her father was bringing home to feed the family of eight children.

Margaret was a slender child whose foot would hardly reach the pedal on the piano. On Saturdays she would begin playing at the store at about 8:30 in the morning, and would still be playing at 5:00 in the afternoon. She describes herself in this fashion: "I used to try to look older than I was. I was pretty well developed up here, you know, and I used to like to show that, too. I used to try to strut around. I put mascara around my eyes, and wore my hair up in a bun. I put a tiny bit of lipstick on -- you were rather common if you put a lot of lipstick on."

Margaret never had time to finish her education or go to any teachers who could teach her anything more about music. From age 5 she had played on her piano at home, and learned to read music from her public school education in the subject. Having total recall of melody and harmony of anything she has ever read or heard, she simply kept going from one job to another. She started to play the "high spots", working shifts in the 5¢ movies. Again quoting: "I played everything to fit the picture. You know 'Sympathy'. Everytime somebody's crying up on that screen, they got 'Sympathy' (that's how old 'Sympathy' is). Parts I didn't want to see, I put my head down. And I used to switch jobs until I got a half-decent salary. So, I mean to tell you, when it comes to experiences, I've really had them in all types of that kind of work."

At age seventeen, Margaret met her husband, Edward Mitchell, a realtor, at one of the stores where she was selling sheet music, and married him soon after. Her professional name became "Mitch".

In Baltimore, Mitch put in a lot of time at the Maryland Country Club, where she played requests for such celebrities as Irving Berlin. Fred Campbell, a representative of Feist-Remick Music Company, started her rehearsing singers at the old Maryland Theater with the Keith circuit, and it was in this way that she met Arthur Godfrey. He had a radio program on WFBR and he had Mitch accompany the singers he had on his program.

At the Ford Theater she rehearsed many of the old-time singers, such as Sophie Tucker and Jimmy Durante. Most of them only had manuscript copies or lead sheets of new songs that they were to plug, so Mitch would find the key, and have this information relayed by telegram to Feist in New York, where an orchestration was worked up and sent back in time for performance at the Maryland Theater that week.

During this era, she worked with name bands such as Jack Lederer's and John White's. For years she played for World War I troops for USO shows, rehearsing in the basement of the Maryland Hotel. She rehearsed troops there for over five years, receiving a little gold USO pin (which she still has), and a 5-year diploma for that service. Most of the service men wanted to sing. "What key do you sing in?" Mitch would ask. They didn't know, so she would say, "Start to sing", and she would strike the note and go right along with them. That was all the rehearsing they had, just long enough for

Mitch to find out what they wanted to sing. Then they would go upstairs and play the show for a couple of hours, one number after another. Some of them danced, and Mitch accompanied them. She also played for the Lorraine Bac Dance Studio in Baltimore for about six years.

Her husband died shortly before World War II, when she left Baltimore and traveled with the Keith circuit. She made a trip to Germany, entertaining the passengers both ways on the boat with her piano playing. At one time she worked in Denver at Red Rocks, with a 16-piece orchestra. They used to have big square-dances. They could accommodate 5,000 people in those seats carved out of the red rock. She played for the callers who came from Colorado Springs.

In later years, Mitch played for five years for USO shows in San Diego. "When I left there, they gave me a big diploma and an armful of roses, and all that stuff." These shows were at the YMCA. There was a basement where the men would line up to rehearse. Here she repeated with the troops of World War II what she had done in Baltimore during World War I.

For a number of years in San Diego, Mitch was the piano accompanist for the dance studios of Rubia Miller. Miss Miller, incidentally, was herself a scintillating stage terpsichorean covering several of those delightful entertaining years of Ragtime, and a continuing close friend of Mitch to the present time. It was in San Diego that Mitch had the misfortune to fall, while alighting from a street car, breaking her hip, which changed the whole course of her life. As the result of this incapacity, she moved to Napa, California, at the suggestion of one of her two daughters, where she is still living. She will observe her 80th birthday on November 9, 1971.

Though presently confined to a wheel chair, she is still in demand for local civic and other clubs. When physically able, she graciously complies with these requests, though often at great discomfort to herself. She is truly an amazing person.

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RAGTIME VIGNETTES

It was reported from England, in February, that Dustin Hoffman the star of Midnight Cowboy played ragtime at a pub piano in remote Cornwall. This happened during time off from the British filming of Straw Dogs. He remained unrecognized by the locals present. Ragtime buffs can readily explain that it was the ragtime (along with the mild and bitters) that drew all the attention.

The river boat "Delta Queen" rests at its base in Cincinnati, Ohio and out of service because of its inability to meet the terms of the 1966 Fire Safety Act. The "Delta Queen" was the last of the wooden stern-wheelers to sail the Mississippi on regular cruises. Special legislation may yet exempt the boat from certain requirements and hence revive and extend an active life. If this comes about, it could be good news for ragtime country.

RAGTIME FOLKLORE...

WHICH TIGER IS IT ?

by RONALD V. BEVAN

It is always difficult to put legends to rest. The delightful fact that legends necessarily defy verification results in opening the door to an entertaining exercise in the art of continuing speculation. Present day ragtime historians in common with other Jazz historians struggle to document the undocumented of the Ragtime Era into an orderly, chronologically correct, and authentic framework but with limited success. Flowing from their research, reputable and knowledgeable men do not always agree on biographical details concerning the same incident. Many of those who lived through the Ragtime Era found in later years, as one would expect, that perfect recall eluded the best of them. The very principals of history have sometimes preferred to allow facts to grow a web of uncertainty. Our ragtime legends will live on despite efforts to resolve their conflicting notions of truth. One such area of conflict is challengingly presented in a short article included in this issue entitled "Which Tiger Is It?" by Ronald V. Bevan.

WHICH TIGER IS IT ?

A recent book written by Otto Whittaker, (SUCH LANGUAGE Anderson: Drake House, 1969, p. 31), etymologically illustrates the word "tiger". In addition to the common definitions such as "one's ferocity" and the "carnivorous Felis tigris", Whittaker cites an uncommon, probably slang usage of the word: "... a provincial name for the worst possible five-card poker hand." Futhermore the author makes reference to Mr. "Jelly Roll" Morton and reports that it was this type of poker hand that inspired Morton's ragtime classic, TIGER RAG. Whittaker writes, "It came over from faro, another card game in which the player has a tiger by the tail when he bluffs on a low hand." Author Whittaker maintains that Alan Lomax, while on the staff of the Library of Congress, confirmed this terminology in a biography of "Jelly Roll" Morton entitled MR. JELLY ROLL:

> And all his life Jelly Roll held a tiger by the tail. In barrelhouse lingo "tiger" meant the lowest hand a man could draw in a poker game --seven high, deuce low, and without a pair, straight or flush. It takes nerve to hold on to a tiger, and all he had was the music of the Storyville bordellos--it was his tiger and he bet his life on it.

Another authority, Max Morath, accredits the TIGER RAG to themes combined and arranged from French Quadrilles (waltz, promenade, etc.). Moreover the title, as Morath put it, stemmed from the section which "Jelly Roll" executed with his elbow. It seemed that when "Jelly Roll" was first performing this rag, he had not as yet named it until someone said, "Pardon me, Mr. Morton, but if you don't mind my saying so, when you play that part of the song with your elbow it sounds exactly like a tiger roar." [Max Morath, (New York: Merv Griffin Show, C. B. S.)]. From this encounter Morton was said to have titled it the TIGER RAG.

One wonders the extent (and even the authenticity) to which a five-card poker hand influenced the TIGER RAG. This is not to say that "Jelly Roll's" life could not be compared to the worst possible hand in a card game, nor is it to say that ragtime or those who played ragtime were not recipients of unjust dealings. (Ragtime was considered for years an evil and unsophisticated music of the Negroes who, themselves, drew a rotten hand). In regards to Mr. Whittaker's thesis, I sincerely doubt that such an outlook on life inspired "Jelly Roll" Morton to express himself via the TIGER RAG -- personal feelings are best expressed not by copying another's musical themes but by creating one's own.

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LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. We will attempt to answer questions pertaining to ragtime in this column. Full address of correspondent will be printed unless requested otherwise.

Frank Holland, director of the British Piano Museum at Brentford, Middlesex in England, has written a letter telling us of a ragtimer from Prague named Vladimir Klusak who visits London from time to time. Mr. Holland says of Klusak -

"He learned to play 'Frog Legs Rag' in two hours simply by watching the notes operating on a pianola."

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To Merrywilliam Newland of Detroit, Eli Kaufman of Buffalo and William Hyder of Baltimore -

Many thanks for the copies of the article by Harold C. Schonberg released by the New York Times in January this year. It is good news that more and more people are discovering Scott Joplin. (We hope to be able to reprint the article in a later issue of THE RAGTIMER.

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN	- at the Waldorf-Astoria, 8:30 p. m. to 12:30 a. m. in Toronto
KEN MAYHERCY	- "Ragtime $ Bill", Holiday Inn, Lido Beach, Sarasota, Fla.
MIKE MONTGOMERY	- The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Fri. Nights
MAX MORATH	- on the road with his show "At The Turn Of The Century"
BOB SEELEY	- Ted's Pub & Parlor, Pontiac, Mich., Wed. thru Sat. Dakota Inn, Detroit, Mich., Sun.
TREBOR TICHENOR	- and the Saint Louis Ragtimers can be heard on The Goldenrod Showboat in St. Louis, Missouri
PETER TURNER	- at The Bird Cage, Cambridge, England
TEX WYNDHAM	- and The Red Lion Jazz Band, at The Surry Restaurant 1100 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Del.

Performers, please keep us up to date on your engagement schedule for this column.

TURKISH TROPHIES

AN ORIENTAL RAG

by

SARA B. EGAN

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